

Future military reform: Russia's nuclear & conventional forces

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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Arbeitspapier / working paper

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:
SSG Sozialwissenschaften, USB Köln

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Umbach, F. (2002). *Future military reform: Russia's nuclear & conventional forces*. Camberley: Defence Academy of the United Kingdom - Conflict Studies Research Centre. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-217496>

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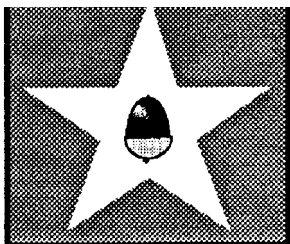
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Conflict Studies Research Centre

Frank Umbach

**Future Military Reform:
Russia's Nuclear & Conventional Forces**

August 2002



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Frank Umbach

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“If one takes a look at today’s situation, one must acknowledge that the breakdown of expenses not only in the Armed Forces, but also in all power structures is hardly optimum. We cannot describe it as optimum today when despite considerable resources being committed by the state to the country’s armed and power-related component, many of our units conduct no drills, no combat training. If pilots do not fly, if sailors almost never put to sea, is everything all right in terms of the structure of the Armed Forces?”

(Opening remarks by President Vladimir Putin at a Security Council meeting on 11 August 2000 to discuss a new Russian strategy for military planning until 2015.¹)

Introduction

Over the past decade, the Russian armed forces have experienced a continual financial crisis and a steep decline - as Russia’s defeat in Chechnya in 1996 and the renewed and ongoing war there since 1999 have brutally revealed. The sinking of the *Kursk* submarine in the Barents Sea in August 2001, and the navy’s clumsy and futile rescue effort as well as its Soviet-style disinformation of its own public illustrated for many Russians and outside observers the crisis in Russia’s armed forces. Indeed, it was a catastrophe waiting to happen. The once mighty Soviet war machine had been brought to its knees by a lack of analytical strategic foresight and the economic realities. In this light, the sinking of the *Kursk* was a tragic metaphor for the decline of the Russian armed forces in general and the Russian Navy in particular.²

Since 1989, Russian experts have discussed genuine military reform. So far, however, only modest steps have been taken.³ Mostly, the Defence Ministry, and in particular the Russian General Staff, has downgraded real “*military reform*” to a “*reform of the armed forces*” throughout the 1990s - and both “*reforms*” are not the same thing.⁴ Neither new strategic concepts nor modernisation plans during the 1990s had been able to keep the military healthy because of deeper socio-cultural and intellectual reasons which are often overlooked.⁵ As a consequence, Russia was forced to rely on its nuclear posture more than ever. Until the summer of 2000, a further “*nuclearisation*” of Russia’s future defence policies, particularly in regard to lowering the nuclear threshold of its substrategic nuclear weapons, could no longer be excluded. Against this background, considerable disagreement existed not only between the political and military elite, but also between Defence Minister Igor Sergeev and the Chief of the General Staff, Anatoly Kvashnin, over the future direction of military reform at the end of the Yeltsin era.⁶ The conflict and discussions highlighted the fact that Russia was standing at the crossroads and forced to choose between being a future global or a regional power - with the need for a decision by the political leadership that could no longer be ignored.

Since the beginning of 2000, President Vladimir Putin has made valiant attempts to maintain Russia’s superpower military status under straitened circumstances. In January 2000 he approved a new National Security Concept (NSC),⁷ in April a new Military Doctrine,⁸ in June a new Foreign Policy Concept,⁹ and in August 2001 a new Naval Doctrine.¹⁰ While all four of these key documents were shaped by a perceived need to preserve Russia’s superpower status, strong forces, and nuclear parity with the United States, there were also distinct differences between them. However, simultaneously, there was an unmistakable increase in concern about

military and foreign policy threats, by contrast to earlier documents such as “NSC 1997”,¹¹ in which the main security dangers were seen primarily as domestic. The documents in the years 2000/2001 reflected a much more sceptical view of the world and a more confrontational attitude toward the US and the NATO. NATO's military intervention in Kosovo in 1999 certainly played an important role in influencing these official documents, but is insufficient to explain those underlying traditional threat perceptions.

Proposals for military reform both predated and accompanied the new strategic concepts. But a major barrier to any sensible reform has also been the lack of money. Putin has compelled the armed forces to adopt more radical reforms, but since these reforms have tried to reconcile the very different interests of the various services, the armaments industry, and the foreign and security policy elite, they have not been coherent and have left many questions open. Domestic debate still swirls around specific threat scenarios and the future of conventional as distinct from nuclear weapons. Only against the background of an analysis of the important and in the West mostly overlooked internal and controversial debate between Sergeyev and Kvashnin of Russia's different threat perceptions, including those after 11 September 2001, and their wide-ranging implications for restructuring Russia's nuclear and conventional forces does Moscow's changing policy toward American missile defence (NMD/TMD) and the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty since the autumn of 2001 become clearer - albeit the most important changes in Russia's foreign security and defence policies took place before September 2001. Thus the pace and amount of a START-III treaty and the reduction of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces were and are dependent on the official threat perception and nuclear deterrent strategy.

In the following analysis, I will start by describing the internal crisis of the Russian armed forces and its implications, on the dangers of mounting integration, the impacts of the demographic and health crisis upon the conscription system, on crime, corruption and other socio-economic trends affecting the armed forces, on the problems of Russia as insufficiently presented defence budgets and the need for further downsizing of the regular armed forces. On this basis, I will analyse the Kvashnin-Sergeyev conflict for re-directing funds to the conventional forces, and discuss Putin's military reform agenda and the nuclear ambiguities of Russia's defence posture as well as the implications for the future of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF). Thereupon, I will give an overview of Russia's present military reform concept. In this light, finally, I will conclude by giving a perspective of the still much needed “Revolution in Military Reforms” in Russia.

The Deepening Crisis in the Russian Armed Forces During the 1990s

The irreversible disintegration of the Soviet Union following the attempted coup d'état in August 1991 caught the Russian military politically, institutionally and psychologically largely unprepared. Since that time, like large sections of the political elite, the military too found it extremely difficult to comprehend the new realities and to come to terms with the new role that accrued to them from the re-orientation of state policy, as evidenced by constant grappling with the problematic military-policy burdens of the past on the one hand and the frequently inadequately defined and often diversely interpreted demands of the future on the other hand. During the 1990s, Russia's armed forces were both the victim and the configurator of domestic and foreign policy developments. The military establishment evidently

saw its duty of loyalty not so much as demanding voluntary and unconditional allegiance to the political authorities of the day as rather being dependent upon the extent to which the political leadership's formulation of Russia's institutional-military and supposedly "objective" or "state-policy" interests matched its own definitions - which are mostly based on geopolitical and geo-strategic considerations of the Cold War period.

Since 1991 a large number of concrete proposals for military reform drawn up by the Defence Ministry as well as by civilian and military experts have been under discussion. In the 1990s, the Russian forces dropped from 2.8 million to 1.2 million, with actual numbers well below official figures. Mostly, however, the Defence Ministry, and in particular the Russian General Staff, has downgraded real "military reform" to a "reform of the armed forces" - and both reforms are not the same thing.¹² While the latter envisions primarily just cutting troop numbers and some structural-organisational reforms of the armed forces themselves, a real military reform envisions fundamental changes in all spheres related to the armed forces, including reforming the civil-military control system, the defence industry and initiating deeper reform of the entire military organisation. Characteristic of almost all official military reform conceptions of the Defence Ministry was the gap between military pretensions and economic reality - a gap which widened until the mid-1990s and which could be closed only from the pretensions side.¹³ In this light, numerous problems complicated even a very narrow understanding of military reform or reform of the armed forces such as: the rise of so-called other forces, the increasing disintegration accompanied with a decline in morale, mounting crime, the unsolved *dedovshchina* problem (the systematic oppression of young recruits by their older comrades), the crisis in the Russian conscription system, lowering of operational readiness, etc.

Other Armed Forces

In the aftermath of the parliamentary shootout of October 1993, President Boris Yeltsin increased in quantity and quality the so called "other forces" (such as border troops and those belonging to the Interior Ministry or other agencies) as part of a divide-and-rule tactic to maintain a political balance between the power ministries. He hoped to ensure that no single military formation would become the dominant force and therewith a threat to his power. As a result, Russia had not only still more than 2,136,000 men under arms (as well as 960,000 civilian employees in the twelve power ministries and security organisations) in the year 2000;¹⁴ the regular forces also had to compete with at least eleven other ministries for financial resources, recruitment of conscripts, and real command authority. Moreover, these "other forces" created their own separate district organisational structure without adopting regulations for inter-force co-ordination.¹⁵ Thus joint military action between the regular armed forces of Russia and the "other troops" had to be negotiated on an ad hoc basis by unit commanders of the various forces, as in the Chechen wars. Against this background, it becomes understandable that the General Staff of Russia's regular armed forces demanded command of all military forces for joint military action like in Soviet times. But the military establishment simultaneously also tried to erode the newly established civilian control on the basis of presidential oversight (instead of the parliamentary mechanisms for oversight in Western democracies). The Yeltsin administration, however, feared that the General Staff could use its commanding power to become the kingmaker in any internal crisis, as in October 1993 when the General Staff hesitated to support the beleaguered Kremlin after finding the military itself on both sides of the barricades.¹⁶

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Table 1: Regular & Other Forces in 1995¹⁷

Category	Number	Agency Budget (Roubles trn)
Ministry of Interior (MVD) <i>Army Gen Anatoliy S Kulikov</i>	300,000	10,408,730
Federal Border Service (FPS) <i>Army Gen Andrey I Nikolayev</i>	250,000	2,331,073
Federal Security Service (FSB) <i>Army Gen Mikhail V Barsukov</i>	130,000	1,470,001
Military Space Forces (VKS) <i>Col-Gen Vladimir L Ivanov</i>	16,000	1,027,733
Civil Defence & Disaster Relief (MChS) <i>Lt-Gen Sergey K Shoygu</i>	40,000	869,873
Communication & Information Agency (FAPSI) <i>Col-Gen Aleksandr V Starovoytov</i>	50,000	722,447
Special Military Construction Directorate (SSMO) <i>Col-Gen Aleksandr V Tumanov</i>	97,000	663,000
Main Protection Directorate for Individuals & Installations (GUO) <i>Lt-Gen Yuriy V Krapivin</i>	40,000	479,094
Defence Highway Construction (FDSU) <i>Maj-Gen Ivan D Marchuk</i>	170,000	397,526
Railroad Troops Agency (AzhV) <i>Col-Gen Grigoriy I Kogat'ko</i>	100,000	328,323
Foreign intelligence Service (SVR) <i>Yevgeniy M Primakov</i>	15,000	208,921
Presidential Security Service (SBPR) <i>Lt-Gen Aleksandr V Korzhakov</i>	4,000	33,710
TOTAL	1,212,000	18,940,391
Ministry of Defence <i>Army Gen Pavel S Grachev</i>	1,900,000	65,855,130
GRAND TOTAL	3,112,000	84,795.521

Altogether, the armed forces had absorbed more than an estimated third of the national budget. If these “other armed forces” had been included in Russia’s official defence budget (according to UN or NATO criteria), Russia would have had more than 3 million people under arms.¹⁸ According to the well-known military reformer Aleksei Arbatov, these often heavily armed paramilitary forces had a combined strength in 1997 of 1.2 million men and total funding of some \$8 billion.¹⁹ All these military and militarised departments and their force structures have reportedly consumed almost 50 percent of all state budget expenditures.²⁰ The regular armed forces receive less than two-thirds of all defence spending according to independent UN and NATO criteria, whilst the remainder is split between various paramilitary organisations. In 2001, Russia’s total military expenditure was not less than 26.7 percent of the total budget.²¹ Russian military reformers have criticised this

“overly-militarised state” for hindering political and economic development.²² Furthermore, under Yeltsin the forces were mostly left to their own devices; the job of military reform was thus handed over to the institutions that needed reforming.

Table 2: 12 Regular & Other Forces in December 2001²³

Category	Numbers of Troops/ Servicemen
Internal Troops	< 200,000
Special Assignment Units of the Interior Ministry (Vityaz, Rus, Rosich, Skif, OMON, SOBR)	3-4,000
Troops of the Federal Border Guards Service	200,000 (planned cut to 183,000 in 2003)
Civilian Defence Troops (of the Emergencies Ministry)	30,000
Railroad Troops	50,000
Federal Service of Special Construction (established in 1997; comprises the Main Directorate of Exploitation and Restoration of the Ministry of Communications, Central Directorate of Military Construction Units of the Nuclear Energy Ministry, Federal Road-Building Service)	< 14,000
Main Directorate of Special Programmes of the President	20,000
Federal Protection Service	< 3,000
Special Assignment Units (such as Alpha and Vypel of the Counter-Terrorist Department of the Federal Security Service)	1,500-2000
<i>Zaslou</i> (special unit of the Foreign Intelligence Service; formed in 1998)	300-500
Main Penitentiary Directorate (of the Justice Ministry; special forces to suppress prison riots, but used in Chechnya as well)	?
Special Detachments of Physical Protection (within the Federal Tax Police Service and State Customs Committee)	> 10,000
TOTAL	531,800-533,500
Regular Armed Forces of Russia	1.2 million (to be reduced to 800,000)

Russia’s “Paper Force” - Dangers of Mounting Disintegration

The policy guidelines of the 1997 National Security Concept stated that, even if all of Russia’s armed forces (including those not belonging to the Defence Ministry) are mobilised, Russia could cope with at best just one regional conflict. But even that had become more and more doubtful during the second half of the 1990s. According to one military source in 1999, unless funding were increased, only 40-50 percent of Russia’s air fleet would still be operational by 2001.²⁴ In the same year, 50 percent of aircraft and 40 percent of anti-aircraft systems and helicopters needed repairs.²⁵ Also largely due to a lack of fuel, flight training in Russia’s Air Force was conducted at only 35 percent of desired levels in 1999, a decrease from 45 percent in 1998.²⁶ As a result, the average number of flying hours a year was only 10-20 per pilot,²⁷ compared to NATO figures of up to 180 hours. That reduction resulted in a threefold increase in the number of accidents in the first half of 2000 compared with the same period a year previously.²⁸

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A US State Department report of 1999 about the “rapid decay” in Russia’s military readiness was even more alarming: in 1998, the Russian army had to cancel 65 percent of its planned regimental exercises and 27 percent of battalion level training.²⁹ Although the Russian navy officially still had 80 major warships (including one aircraft carrier), 160 minor combatants, 24 amphibious ships, and 70 mine countermeasure vessels, its real operational readiness might have been as low as 10 percent - in contrast to more than 70 percent during the Cold War.³⁰ Sea duty for the Russian submarine fleet, for instance, was reduced by 25 percent, while surface ships cancelled 33 percent of their planned exercises in 1998.

In summer 1999, only three divisions and four brigades in the Leningrad, Moscow, North Caucasus and Siberian military districts maintained the status of “permanent readiness units”, which requires having at least 80 percent of full personnel strength and 100 percent of weapons and other equipment. The major military exercise “ZAPAD-99”, conducted in June 1999, demonstrated a much better capability to deploy large combined-arms forces than many Western experts expected.³¹ However, the exercise used up the navy’s entire annual fuel reserve.³² Moreover, as the renewed war in Chechnya started in September 1999, Russia’s conventional military capabilities became increasingly overtaxed.

The system for calling up conscripts also became increasingly obscure because of exemptions, deserters and *dedovshchina*. Citing reports that the military illegally used inexperienced conscripts to fight the Chechen rebels, Tatarstan declared that it would no longer send its conscripts to fight for Russia in the “hotspots” because they had not received training for those combat missions.³³ According to Russian law until the end of 1998, conscripts could be used in armed conflicts only on a voluntary basis.³⁴ The Defence Ministry felt compelled to compromise because it worried that other regions would follow Tatarstan’s example. As the second Chechen war indeed revealed once again, Russia’s conscripts were largely neither well-trained nor had the morale for fighting in the ethnic wars on Russia’s southern periphery - particularly protracted conflicts in which larger numbers of soldiers die.

At the same time, Russia’s conscription system was at the brink of collapse. Draft evasion has been rampant since the early 1990s, and the broad-based desire to avoid military service has been institutionalised in legislation that legally frees roughly 85 percent of all Russian draft-age men from service. The reasons are manifold: brutality in the barracks, often abysmal living conditions, shortages of food and sometimes the basic necessities of life, and the conduct of two bloody wars in the North Caucasus. The result is an army manned in large part by the most disenfranchised of Russia’s underclass and an available draft pool with inferior rates of education, but with higher-than-average rates of health problems and criminality. According to the military prosecutor’s office, 700 to 1,000 young conscripts die every year in “non-combat situations”, albeit independent watchdog groups such as Mother’s Right believe the real numbers are up to four times higher.³⁵

Impact of the Demographic & Health Crisis

The statistics in 1999 revealed that the health crisis and drug problems also increasingly affected the armed forces.³⁶ Reportedly, the number of healthy conscripts dropped by 20 percent over the previous decade. According to Defence Ministry data in spring 2000, 10 percent of conscripts in the ground forces and navy were drug addicts, and one in every nine crimes in the armed forces were drug-related.³⁷ Nearly 33 percent of all conscripts were either exempted or “retrieved” for health reasons during the spring-summer call-up campaign. Drug

addiction had soared by 100 percent since 1993. In 1999 alone, the number of crimes connected with illegal drug trafficking committed by servicemen increased by 32 percent. In the Chelyabinsk region alone, a rise of over 300 percent since the mid-1990s had been reported.³⁸ In autumn 1999, 57 percent of those examined were regarded as unfit to serve, and 49,000 men, almost one fifth of the total conscripted, did not report for duty. Despite the expected one million conscripts in spring 2000, the armed forces were only able to draft 13 percent, or 191,612.³⁹

Crime, Corruption & Other Socio-Economic Trends

There are other problems, as well. Incidents of bribery increased by almost 40 percent in 1999, although overall crime rates had fallen by 12.4 percent compared with summer 1998.⁴⁰ Housing is another challenge: by the end of 2001 140,000 servicemen lacked apartments for their families.⁴¹ Furthermore, the widespread socio-economic crisis in the armed forces resulted in a growing de facto alliance between local military commanders and regional political bosses - a fact that has opened the door to patronage, widespread corruption, and weapons smuggling. All these negative trends had been particularly prevalent in the military districts of Siberia and the Far East.⁴² Crime, accident rates, inadequate maintenance of weapons and infrastructure, failure to pay for energy and food all seemed to exceed the levels in European military districts. In July 1998 Aleksandr Lebed, governor of Krasnoyarsk Krai, in an open letter to Moscow even threatened to assume control of the nuclear weapons based in his region in order to force the government to pay its soldiers.⁴³ However, the threat of "nuclear regionalism", the possibility that regional leaders might acquire de facto control over various nuclear assets on their territories, including missile material, nuclear power stations, and ultimately nuclear weapons, was fortunately rather remote, but not entirely unrealistic for the near and mid-term future.

At the same time, the future of the Russian armed forces is dependent upon a well trained and educated officer corps. But by 2001, 47 out of 102 Russian military academies had been closed since 1998, with another 10 forthcoming. In this regard, the lack of a professional NCO base is one of the biggest challenges to reform and to fight the still widespread *dedovshchina*. Pavel Felgenhauer, for instance, lamented in February 2001: "Commanding generals are not 'reforming' anything within their domain for the simple reason that they genuinely believe the Soviet military machine was the best in the world and it doesn't need reform, but restoration."⁴⁴

However, the military is not alone to blame for the catastrophic situation in the armed forces. The majority of Russia's ruling political elite has largely maintained the former Soviet threat perception and the belief in Russia as a great power regardless of all qualitative and quantitative economic, social and demographic factors. Even in Russia's foreign policy concept of June 2000, it was stated explicitly that "Russia is a great power; one of the most influential centres of the modern world".⁴⁵

Problems of the Defence Budgets

From the very creation of new armed forces in 1992, Russia had inherited the majority of the huge Soviet war machine and too little financial resources to maintain and - to a certain degree - also reform it. Although the armed forces were reduced under Defence Minister Pavel Grachev, the gap between Russia's military ambitions to maintain at least a military great (if not super)power status and the economic-financial constraints had widened. At the end of the 1990s, Russia and

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its military had only maintained a “Virtual Great Power Status” that could hardly cover its declining influence on the global and regional levels.⁴⁶

The collapse of Russian state finances in summer 1998 made any effective military reform even more doubtful. In the second quarter of 1999, the under-financing of the armed forces amounted to 200 million rubles; only 31 percent of the military budget had been confirmed.⁴⁷ At the same time, total debts to the Army and Navy had reached 50 billion rubles, almost half of the entire defence budget.⁴⁸ As a result of domestic uncertainties, details of the 1999 defence budget were classified again - for the first time since 1991.⁴⁹

In this context it is important to stress that Russia's defence budgets have never been as transparent as the defence budgets of NATO states. The 1998 defence budget, for instance, still excluded the amounts spent on “other forces,” or the expenses for the military reform programme itself. Though Russia's Defence Ministry lobbied for 310 billion rubles, the official defence budget in 1998 was just 81.7 billion rubles. Of that, the military had received only 30 billion rubles by the end of November 1998. At that time, the defence ministry's debts totalled 60 billion rubles, including 16 billion rubles in salaries and pensions.⁵⁰ In April 1999, the federal government owed nearly 7.5 billion rubles just to armed forces personnel.⁵¹

In the mid-1990s, the Ministry's own most optimistic projections saw adequate funding beginning only in 2004, but the financial crisis of 1998 had made even those earlier calculations unrealistic. Given this background, it was also not surprising that large portions of military expenditure remained hidden in other budgets, making it impossible for the Duma and its defence committee to exercise proper parliamentary oversight. As the chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, Colonel-General Andrey Nikolayev, confirmed in September 2000:

“The detailed breakdown of the defence spending has been classified top secret, with no coherent explanations offered, for the fourth year in a row. There are only six expenditure items in the open part of the budget. As a result, the Federal Assembly is deprived of the opportunity to openly discuss and solve financial problems related to defence spending that do not include any classified data. Actually, Russia informs the world about its defence spending, via the UN, much more thoroughly than it informs its own citizens and legislators.”⁵²

Moreover, by the end of May 2000, the military had only received 6.5 percent of promised funds for 2000.⁵³ Actual defence expenditure is not 2.64 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) as officially stated (below the 3.5% of GDP that President Boris Yeltsin ordered as the highest boundary for the defence budget), but more realistically 5 to 6 percent. Throughout the 1990s, however, the armed forces actually received only a portion of the budget promised.

The Need for Further Cuts

While the official overall strength of the regular Armed Forces had been reduced to 1.2 million by 1 January 1999 and is expected to fall further, only about one-third or even one-quarter of that number can be considered genuinely operational. Without the political will to make drastic cuts, Moscow instead maintains a largely non-operational military establishment that will exacerbate the severe structural weaknesses dating back to Soviet times.⁵⁴ As Aleksey Arbatov, Deputy Chairman of the Duma Defence Committee, argued:

“If Russia decided to bring the financing of its servicemen up to US standards, then it would have either to reduce its army from the current 1.2 million servicemen to 100,000 people or increase the military budget up to 6 trillion rubles, or seven times greater a sum than the overall total of the 2000 federal budget.”⁵⁵

Under the present and projected budget levels, the principal priorities of Russia's defence policies are unrealistic. Arbatov offered the following options for setting priorities for Russia's conventional and nuclear forces in the year 2000:

Table 3: Future Russian Force Options⁵⁶

	⁺ A*	⁺ B*	[√] C*	[√] D*	[√] E*
Strategic Nuclear Warheads	1,500	2,000-2,500	3,000	2,000	1,500
Forces for Local Conflicts	Larger	Minimal	Larger	Moderate	Larger
Forces for “Balkan-Type” Contingency	Minimal	Almost none	Minimal	Moderate	Larger

Assumptions:

- * Raise defence budget to 3.5% of GNP.
- + Keep the armed forces at their current level of 1.2 million personnel.
- √ Reduce military personnel to 0.8 million and change ratio between maintenance and investment portions of defence budget to 55:45 or even 50:50.

Given the scarce resources, a further reduction to some 600,000 seemed unavoidable within the next decade.⁵⁷ However, Russia's General Staff still saw 1.2 to 1.3 million as the “minimum strength” and the “crucial barrier which the state cannot cross”. This was because the military and political leadership might not resort to using even a limited number of nuclear weapons for solving defence tasks in a local war which can escalate to a full-fledged regional war (against NATO and the US), as the Chief of the Centre for Strategic Forecasts of the General Staff, Colonel Vyacheslav Zubarev, argued in June 2000.⁵⁸

In summer 1999 the defence ministry had great difficulty in mustering 60,000 soldiers for the invasion of Chechnya, and more than 40,000 troops had to be mobilised from other forces in order to secure the operational minimum of 100,000. It was these problems that induced then Prime Minister Putin even before he became President in January 2000 to embark on a proper reform of the military. According to military journalist Alexander Golts, however, the generals had no real desire for reform, as was clearly shown in the June 1999 staff exercises with nuclear scenarios (“Zapad-99”) and in the spring manoeuvres and missile exercises of 2001.⁵⁹

Furthermore, Russia's military hardware will become obsolete by 2005-2010. In this light, Sergey Rogov has warned that Russia has no more than 10 years to strengthen the country's economy.⁶⁰ Indeed, most weapon systems Russia produced from 1992-1999 had been exported to foreign countries.

Table 4: Weapon Deliveries of Russia's Military Industrial Complex, 1992-1999⁶¹

Weaponry	Exported Abroad	Deliveries to Russia's Armed Forces
Ships	11	2
Submarines	10	2
Main Battle Tanks	435	31
Armoured Personnel Carriers & Infantry Fighting Vehicles	217	17
Planes	278	7
Helicopters	98	8
Aircraft & Other Missile Defence Systems	22	1

Overcoming Excessive Reliance on Nuclear Weapons - Putin's Plans for Comprehensive Military Reform

The Kvashnin-Sergeyev Conflict Over Redirecting Funds to the Conventional Forces

"Our military faces a systemic crisis, which must be solved by radical measures. ... As the choice looks now, we will lose our parity with the US or we are going to lose the war in Chechnya. More likely, we'll lose both."

(Pavel Felgenhauer in summer 2000)⁶²

Following the promotion of Commander-in-Chief of the Strategic Rocket Forces (SRF) Igor Sergeyev to the position of defence minister in May 1997, he succeeded in merging the Space Defence Troops, Missile Defence Troops and the Missile Early Warning Systems (MEWS) with the SRF. He also sought to create a Joint High Command for the Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF) which, in contrast to other proposals, would not be part of the General Staff.⁶³ It would also control the 12th Main Directorate of the Ministry of Defence,⁶⁴ which maintains and stores all nuclear warheads in Russia - a task given traditionally also to the General Staff. Therewith, the SNF and its Joint High Command would have become a powerful competitor to the General Staff that would have broken with more than 70 years of Soviet tradition. Reportedly, some 80-90 percent of total armament resources were channelled to Sergeyev's former command of the SRF by the end of the 1990s.⁶⁵ Hardly surprisingly, that drastically worsened the state of the conventional forces and offered a striking contrast to the "Concept of Development of Nuclear Forces until 2010" and the "Foundations (Concept) of State Policy of the Russian Federation in the Area of Defence Development until 2005", adopted in July-August 1998.⁶⁶ Sergeyev, the Foreign Ministry and many civilian foreign and security experts justified their favouritism for Russia's SRF on the grounds that under all circumstances Russia must maintain nuclear parity with the US and NATO.⁶⁷ In fact, Russia's nuclear arsenal was the last attribute of a "virtual" superpower whose economic base was becoming ever more dubious.⁶⁸ Therefore, they instrumentalised the official threat perception in which NATO and the US nuclear strategic forces were portrayed as the most dangerous threat to Russia's national security.

Against this background Chief of the General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin presented some radical proposals for changing Russia's armed forces by 2016 at a Defence Ministry staff meeting on 12 July 2000. These essentially favoured developing conventional weapons at the expense of the SRF. He justified the "denuclearisation" by arguing that not NATO and the US Strategic Nuclear Forces, but rather the ethnic regional conflicts at the southern rim of Russia and Islamic fundamentalists and terrorists were the most dangerous threats to Russia's security.⁶⁹ Accordingly, he told senior officials and the business establishment that Russia could no longer sustain a posture like NATO's, nor could it compete militarily with the Western alliance. Therefore, he also favoured a new foreign policy that envisioned a closer relationship with the West and even the future possibility of NATO membership.⁷⁰

By 2003 Kvashnin foresaw a reduction in the status of SRF from an independent force to a weapons system that would be absorbed into the air force; thereafter, the Russian military would go over to the classic tripartite division of land, air and sea forces. In addition, by 2003 there would be a unilateral reduction in the SRF from 19 to 2 divisions and scrapping of 150 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and 500 to 1,500 warheads. In fact, this meant a unilateral disarmament of more than 400 of the total stock of 780 ICBMs, the majority of which needed to be taken out of service in any case, either because of age or treaty requirements under START II. By 2001 space weapons and missile-defence forces (which had been taken from the air force in 1997 by Sergeyev and folded into the SRF in what was called a "coup d'état within the military apparatus") were to be put under the command of the General Staff.⁷¹

These proposals immediately ran into massive resistance, not only from Sergeyev, but also from the Foreign Ministry and many other senior officers as well as from prominent civilian military experts like Aleksey Arbatov and Sergey Rogov. The latter accused Kvashnin of a "strategic capitulation" towards Washington because "the US gets an overwhelming advantage in its nuclear capacity, and will be able to secretly deploy thousands of ordinary high-precision weapons to attack Russia's sites,"⁷² and: "Abandoning the nuclear shield, Kvashnin will turn Russia into an Indonesia without missiles. There will be no turning back then, because the Russian missile industry will be destroyed for good."⁷³

This clash was to some extent the continuation of a row between two schools of thought and their different worldviews throughout the 1990s: a "traditionalist" school of thought who saw Russia's military potential as the guarantor of its international great power status and directed its policies against any foreign policy losses or deterioration of Russian military power in general and of its Strategic Nuclear Forces in particular; and a more "realist" school of thought who favoured aligning Russia's future with contemporary economic and political realities inside and outside Russia.⁷⁴ Its continuation at the highest level inside the Russian high command led to a split of the military elite. It signalled that at least the General Staff was overcoming the "Kosovo syndrome," the expectation of NATO's use of force against Russia over political disagreements.⁷⁵ That led to a further increase in the reliance on tactical nuclear weapons as the only means to deter NATO. Russia's political elite had painfully to discover that Russia had no military instruments to influence a Yugoslav-type future conflict: their conventional forces were too weak as the second Chechen war demonstrated, whilst Russia's strategic nuclear forces were not credible because Moscow was not willing to commit suicide over Serbia or other similar conflicts. As a Russian commentator summarised the conflict inside the Russian high command in March 2002:

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“... when Sergeyev was the minister, the Strategic Rocket Forces did what they wanted with the military budget, commandeering a lion's share of the funds for themselves. It was done to the detriment of other branches of the service, without so much as a thought spared to their needs. It should be noted here that national interests of Russia were not jeopardised by a hypothetical nuclear exchange, and it does not take a genius to understand that the amount of delivery means for strategic nuclear arms Russia possesses is too much for it. As for the Russian general application forces, they were left far behind world standards in virtually all parameters. The situation being what it is, Kvashnin ... could not do other than to incite a mutiny against the missile tyranny. By the way, virtually all Russian generals supported him in this. Had it not been for the rebellious chief of the General Staff, the pseudo-reforms initiated by Sergeyev might have utterly ruined the Army and Navy. It was so apparent that even leaders of the state backed up Kvashnin. All the same, the 'battle' is still presented to the general public as a public brawl inflamed by Kvashnin.”⁷⁶

The Ambiguities of Russia's Defence Posture

“The conflict in the top echelons of the military command makes it patently clear that the military should not be allowed to reform itself. It is here that the conflict is essentially rooted. This is why civilian control is needed and the military has to be split into political, administrative, and operational commands. There can be no doubt that sooner or later 'Kvashnin's plan' will be implemented, with or without Kvashnin. Such is the objective tendency of transformation of the Russian Armed Forces.”⁷⁷

Because of this polarisation among the generals, Putin was forced to make a basic decision in order to avoid further erosion and disintegration in the armed forces.⁷⁸ But interestingly, he stopped any debate only after Sergeyev reacted to Kvashnin's demands. Despite their public infighting, the meeting of the Security Council on 11 August 2000 did not result in the immediate sacking of either Sergeyev or Kvashnin. But he dismissed six generals allied with Sergeyev who reportedly resisted plans to disband the SRF and subordinate them to the Air Forces in order to cut costs. It indicated that Putin took sides with Kvashnin in the unusually public feud over how to divide Russia's scarce resources between conventional and nuclear forces.⁷⁹

But it helped Putin considerably to redirect Russia's foreign and security policies on the basis of a more realistic threat perception towards a rapprochement with the West, NATO and the US - long before the September 2001 events. Thereby Putin also redefined Russia's arms control and disarmament policies in regard to the ABM treaty and a START-III compromise. In this respect, Putin followed the strategic agenda of Kvashnin and the General Staff.

The proposal by the Chief of the General Staff to “denuclearise” Russia's forces was particularly explosive because it was a clear departure from the “nuclear” defence policy set out in the 2000 Military Doctrine and NSC documents that gave special recognition to the enhanced value of substrategic nuclear weapons. Russia had already dropped its 1982 pledge to a “no-first use” policy on nuclear weapons in the document “Principle Guidance on the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation” in November 1993.⁸⁰ It had since underlined the increasing role of Russia's strategic and tactical nuclear weapons in its defence policies.⁸¹ Many Russian

security and defence experts advocated placing a greater reliance on nuclear weapons to compensate for the deficiencies of the country's conventional forces. Not only strategic, but also tactical nuclear weapons played a much more important role in Russia's defence posture, and particularly in the Far East opposite China.⁸² This new emphasis on the role of nuclear weapons had already been confirmed in Russia's 1997 NSC⁸³ and in doctrine and strategy proposals in the following years. It suggested an excessive reliance on nuclear forces for virtually any military-political contingency, including the right to use them as first strike weapons and even pre-emptively in ethno-political conflicts that Russia's conventional forces could not realistically and effectively deal with.⁸⁴

Reports about the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad Oblast in January 2001 - which Russia immediately officially denied - highlighted the sub-strategic nuclearisation tendencies in the European theatre as well. It also demonstrated once again that a verifiable treaty for tactical nuclear weapons between NATO and Russia was urgently needed.⁸⁵ Characteristically for the enhanced status of Russia's nuclear weapons in its defence posture, Russian military experts produced and discussed a concept of "de-escalating" conventional conflicts through the use of nuclear weapons and described the evolving security posture as "extended nuclear deterrence" to demonstrate Russia's resolve and readiness to use force, including nuclear weapons.⁸⁶

Moreover, there are at least 6,000 operational warheads and thousands more in storage, indicating that these weapons were not destroyed as pledged by former Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin in 1991 and 1992. In 1997 the well-known Russian military expert and journalist Pavel Felgenhauer had already criticised the "nuclearisation" of Russia's defence policies in 1997:

"... money is being spent on superfluous nuclear missiles which, in accordance with agreements on non-targeting, are aimed 'nowhere'. The fairy tale of reform 'under the nuclear umbrella', the new missiles and discussions on parity will be paid for not only with money, but also with the blood of Russian soldiers in future local conflicts in this country's southern regions."⁸⁷

Table 5: Russian Nuclear Forces 2002: Non-Strategic Forces⁸⁸

	Launchers	Warheads
Air defence		
SAMs (SA-5B Gammon, SA-10 Grumble)	1,200	1,200
Bombers & fighters		
Tu-22M Backfire (105), Su-24 Fencer (280)	385	1,540
Naval		
<i>Aircraft</i>		
Tu-22M Backfire (45), Su-24 Fencer (50)	95	190
<i>Cruise missiles</i>		
SS-N-9, SS-N-12, SS-N-19, SS-N-21, SS-N-22	n/a	240
<i>Anti-submarine</i>		
SS-N-15, SS-N-16, torpedoes	n/a	210
TOTAL		3,380*

* An additional 8,000-10,000 non-operational strategic and non-strategic warheads may be in reserve or awaiting dismantlement.

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Indeed, Russia placed too much emphasis on nuclear scenarios that were largely unrealistic and did not address any of the most important security problems on its southern flank. It tried to bolster its declining world power status but without having effective means of control,⁸⁹ and instead of improving living conditions and raising the actual fighting capacity of conventional troops engaged in peacemaking missions and internal conflicts.

The current Military Doctrine states that Russia must have a potential for nuclear deterrence ensuring “the infliction of required damage to any aggressor, either state or a coalition, under any circumstances.”⁹⁰ Although the final version of the doctrine does not specifically mention Russia’s right to the first use of nuclear weapons, the document makes clear that “the Russian Federation keeps the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear arms and other WMD [weapons of mass destruction] against it or its allies, and in response to a large-scale aggression with the use of conventional arms in situations critical for the national security of the Russian Federation”.⁹¹ The vagueness of the phrase “situations critical for national security” enables Moscow to interpret it relatively freely, although the October 1999 draft version of the doctrine was even more ambiguous in this regard.⁹²

Moreover, Russian nuclear weapons designers are confronted with the fact that their country can no longer afford a vast nuclear weapon archipelago like that of the Soviet era. As a result, they have lobbied together with General Staff to build a new generation of low-yield tactical nuclear weapons - weapons which could be Moscow’s answer to its lack of high-precision conventional weapon systems, and which have been defined as “strategic weapons”.⁹³

However, the use of Russia’s present tactical nuclear arsenal even in a major military conflict with China is very questionable because of the vicinity of almost all major Russian cities and military headquarters in the region to the common border with China.⁹⁴ The use of non-strategic nuclear forces is only a deterrent when Moscow would use longer-range tactical nuclear weapons that threaten China’s hinterland and major cities beyond the common border. Recognising these defence dilemmas on its potential eastern front, Russia may develop a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons and munitions with low-yield and super-low-yield, delivered to targets by both strategic and tactical delivery systems such as the newly developed Iskander 400 km short-range missile system.⁹⁵ In 1999, Russia conducted seven sub-critical tests on Novaya Zemlya and more in 2000.⁹⁶ However, START-I prohibits the deployment of new air launched cruise missiles (ALCMs) on medium bombers, reducing the options for a cheap expansion of a theatre-range nuclear force, whereas the 1991 decision by President Gorbachev (confirmed by President Yeltsin in 1992) to retain only air based tactical nuclear weapons prevents their deployment on ships, submarines or on the Iskander missile. That explains why the Russian military favoured giving up these arms control agreements and their restrictions which prevented cost-effective military solutions to their perceived potential security threats. As Nikolai Sokov rightly argued:

“Paradoxically, the less threat Russia anticipates from NATO, the greater the propensity to withdraw from arms control treaties and the greater the emphasis placed on substrategic nuclear weapons (including the use of heavy bombers for theatre missions as well as ALCM deployment on medium bombers). If the threat from NATO is low, then existing treaties lose their primary value: restrictions on US and NATO forces. Instead, in the absence of threat from the West, Russia would be able to disregard a

possible buildup of US nuclear forces and perceive much greater value in increasing its own nuclear arsenal vis-à-vis other threats (from the south, for example)."⁹⁷

Furthermore, the serious internal debate over the use of nuclear and chemical weapons in Chechnya in 1999 and 2000 seemed to confirm that Moscow's priorities still tended toward a further nuclearisation of Russia's defence policy.⁹⁸ But given Russia's economic and financial constraints, further modernisation of its Strategic Nuclear Forces and tactical nuclear arsenal would only exacerbate underlying problems because it would come at the further expense of conventional forces. It would result in a continued decline in morale and operational effectiveness at a time when Russia must cope with a lasting and extremely violent ethnic conflict in the Northern Caucasus - a conflict that Putin tries to end but has no solution in sight. Hence, reliance on the nuclear factor does not necessarily guarantee Russia's national security under all circumstances, including dealing with potential threats posed by China.

Against this background of a dangerous excessive emphasis on nuclear weapons for all kind of contingencies with the prospect of conducting warfighting according to concepts of operational art that envision the pre-emptive or even the preventive use of tactical nuclear weapons in ethnic conflicts, Kvashnin's key conclusion was based on a more realistic analysis in which it was not the US and NATO that were the main threats to Russia, but the conflicts in Chechnya and elsewhere, where nuclear weapons cannot guarantee Russia's security and stability.

Implications for the Future of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces (SNF)

In the 1990s, Russia's nuclear forces had become a multiplier to compensate for the inferiority and the declining capabilities of its conventional forces. But directing the constrained budget for Russia's military to the SRF deepened the problem of an unbalanced force structure, incapable of coping with the most pressing military contingencies: limited wars and low-intensity conflicts. Nonetheless, funding for the new Topol-M (SS-27) missile - in particular for its more survivable, but also more expensive road-mobile version - was still insufficient.

But despite many persuasive arguments, Kvashnin's expectation of large budget savings from the SRF cuts is exaggerated. In 1999 the SRF was supposed to have consumed 18 percent and in 2000 10 percent of the total defence budget. But 40 to 60 percent of all research and development money and 80-93 percent of procurement funds went to the SRF.⁹⁹ As it is less the missiles than the associated infrastructure (such as early warning systems and satellites, 80 percent of which need replacing) that is costly,¹⁰⁰ Kvashnin's reform proposals would save only some 19 million rubles over 15 years (0.7 percent of the planned defence budget for the period). Furthermore, nuclear disarmament requires substantial new investment for the storage and destruction of warheads and ballistic missiles. By 2007, Russia will have built and deployed less than (the originally planned) 150-170 Topols, not to mention the 600-700 it requires for maintaining the START-II level of around 3,000-3,500 warheads.¹⁰¹ As originally agreed on 3 July 1998 at a Security Council meeting, Russia wanted to produce 30-40 new SS-27s on average per year (also the most cost effective rate of production), and 350-400 until 2010.¹⁰² In the 1980s, the production rate of the SS-25 was, on average, 48 per year. A lower figure of 20 new SS-27 would not translate into any significant financial savings because of the research and development costs. Russia would just obtain fewer missiles for the same money. An even lower production, down to 12-15 ICBMs per year, would threaten the survival of the network of about 200 suppliers.¹⁰³

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But even the goal of 150-170 with a present production rate of just six new Topol-M per year seems rather unrealistic. It is more likely that Russia will not have more than 100-120 new Topol-M ICBMs, whilst the life-spans of nearly all older Soviet-made SS-18 and SS-19 ICBMs will be exhausted.¹⁰⁴

Even if part of this counter-argument is exaggerated, Russia still faces the dilemma of having to make a strategic choice between substantial new investment in a new strategic nuclear weapons system or cuts in its nuclear arsenal. In the next few years, the Russian Defence Ministry plans to invest less than 28 percent of all financial resources appropriated for the acquisition of new strategic nuclear weapons and infrastructure into the radical modernisation and restructuring of its Strategic Nuclear Forces.¹⁰⁵ High-yield liquid-fuel MIRVed ballistic missiles are being replaced with single warhead Topol-M missiles of which Russia has 30 at present. The construction of the new Yury Dolgorukiy-class nuclear powered submarine armed with 20 new solid-fuel SLBM (each Bulava-30 missile - a solid-fuel SLBM based on the design of the Topol-M ICBM - has ten warheads) has started, albeit the development of this new missile has been extended and that makes its production before 2010 highly uncertain. In the coming 10-15 years, only two to three new nuclear powered strategic submarines will be produced for the Russian Navy, with a maximum of 200-300 strategic nuclear warheads.¹⁰⁶

Furthermore, a new generation of ALCMs with a range up to 5,500 km has been developed for heavy bombers. However, the Air Force can count on keeping not more than 100-200 ALCMs on its TU-160 strategic bombers. At present, Russia has 20 of those bombers which can each carry 12 ALCMs.¹⁰⁷ While these programmes will ensure an effective nuclear deterrence and maintain Russia's security, the production rate of these new missiles and submarines will also be rather limited as the result of the new defence priorities, the numerous constraints of Russia's defence budget and the need to invest heavily in modernising the C4I infrastructure. Up to 80 percent of Russia's ballistic nuclear missiles are to be withdrawn from active service in light of START-II and because of their age before 2005-2007. The service life of some older missiles can maybe be extended for some few years. But this will not solve the SNF's structural problems because their service life is much shorter than Western missiles' due to poor quality and maintenance difficulties. Even the service life of the newish Topol-M can currently only be extended by one or two years.¹⁰⁸ Hence it seems that Russia will enter the second decade of the 21st century with a nuclear arsenal of probably less than 1,000 strategic nuclear warheads that equals those of France, Britain and China rather than that of the United States.¹⁰⁹ That also explains why some Russian military experts have called for an official START-III ceiling not of 1,500 but of just 1,000 warheads.¹¹⁰

In this light, the SRF Commander-in-Chief, Colonel-General Vladimir Yakovlev, defended Russia's ratification of START-II in April 2000 against the criticism in the Russian Duma, the public and the armed forces themselves by pointing out:

"START-II allows Russia and the US to have 3-3,500 warheads each. I think this is more than enough. I also think START-II is good for Russia from the economic point of view, since 70% of missiles, 60-70% of combat control equipment, and about 70% of satellites now in operation have already become obsolete. Besides, 60% of information systems in the missile-space defence forces are out-of date. ... Over the past ten years, expenditures on the Russian Armed Forces have been reduced approximately ten-fold. Research and development has suffered the

most, as well as weapons and military hardware procurement. This has impacted greatly on the Strategic Missile Forces. Last year we received only 45-50% of the minimum needs of our forces. ... The number of satellites is decreasing faster than new ones are being launched.”¹¹¹

Furthermore, in any variants of the future structure of Russia's SNF, the role of the naval strategic nuclear forces will increase to 35-55 percent of nuclear delivery systems.¹¹² However, this restructuring will involve a more costly investment in Russia's future nuclear arsenal.

One possibility is, however, to reach a compromise with the US for a START-III agreement that gives up the provision of START-II to equip an ICBM just with one warhead. As of mid-2002, Russia has an arsenal of approximately 8,400 operational nuclear warheads, with almost 5,000 deployed on strategic nuclear weapons systems (see Table 6), and nearly 3,400 sub-strategic and air defence warheads (see Table 5). Furthermore, Russia has around 10,000 more nuclear warheads kept in storage. Some are destined for dismantlement, others may function as a strategic reserve for a possible re-deployment.¹¹³

Table 6: Russian Nuclear Strategic Forces, 2002¹¹⁴

Type	Name	Launchers	Year Deployed	Warheads x yield (kiloton)	Total Warheads
ICBMs					
SS-18	Satan	144	1979	10 x 550/750 (MIRV)	1,400
SS-19	Stiletto	137	1980	6 x 550/750 (MIRV)	822
SS-24 M1	Scalpel	36	1987	10 x 550 (MIRV)	360
SS-25	Sickle	360	1985	1 x 550	360
SS-27	n/a	29	1997	1 x 550	29
TOTAL		706			3,011
SLBMs					
SS-N-18 M1	Stingray	96	1978	3 x 200 (MIRV)	288
SS-N-20	Sturgeon	40	1983	10 x 100 (MIRV)	400
SS-N-23	Skiff	96	1986	4 x 100 (MIRV)	384
TOTAL		232			1,072
Bomber/Weapons					
Tu-95 MS6	Bear H6	32	1984	6 AS-15A ALCMs or bombs	192
Tu-95 MS16	Bear H16	31	1984	16 AS-15A ALCMs or bombs	496
Tu-160	Blackjack	15	1987	12 AS-15B ALCMs, AS-16 SRAMs or bombs	180
TOTAL		78			868
GRAND TOTAL					4,951

ALCM - air launched cruise missile; **AS** - air-to-surface missile; **ICBM** - intercontinental ballistic missile, range greater than 5,500 km; **MIRV** - multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles; **SAM** - surface-to-air missile; **SLBM** - submarine-launched ballistic missile; **SRAM** - short-range attack missile.

In this light, Russian experts would like to counteract the cuts of numbers of nuclear missiles by equipping them with multiple, independently targetable, re-entry vehicles (MIRVs). While a single-warhead Topol-M ICBM costs around 100

million rubles, a missile equipped with three warheads costs 150 million and a mobile Topol-M missile with three warheads 200 million. This would offer a cost-effective way to modernise and maintain a strategic arsenal of 1,000 to 1,500 warheads as Russian experts have analysed it.¹¹⁵ A MIRVed arsenal has also been seen as a countermeasure and “asymmetrical response” against too ambitious and threatening US missile defence plans. In this regard, Russia’s Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov went further in May 2000 by remarking: “If the US withdraws from the ABM treaty, Russia would consider itself free from any regulations of the treaty. Then we will have to consider the agreement on liquidation of medium- and short-range systems”.¹¹⁶ However, other military sources have pointed out that the transformation of the Topol-M into missiles with MIRVs will be expensive and cost over \$1billion, and the programme will take 5-7 years.¹¹⁷ In this regard, Russia’s re-MIRVing programme becomes questionable.

The Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty of May 2002

The new Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT), signed on 24 May 2002¹¹⁸ between the US and Russian presidents at their Moscow summit meeting, will not change very much on Russia’s side in regard to its SNF. Both sides agreed to cut their “operationally deployed strategic warheads” to 1,700-2,200 each - approximately two-thirds from their present strategic nuclear arsenals over a 10-year period. The treaty, composed of just 485 words in five articles, however does not define which strategic warheads it covers (or what “operationally deployed strategic warheads” really mean - Russia has a different interpretation) nor how those are to be counted. The US side was primarily interested in as much flexibility as possible, including having the possibility to quickly re-deploy warheads which have been removed from delivery vehicles such as ballistic missiles and bombers. By 2012, it is expected that the US will have deployed 2,200 strategic weapons and retain an additional 2,400 in an operationally maintained status of “responsive capability”.

The final negotiations revealed on one hand the new strategic quality of the US-Russian relations after 11 September 2001, and on the other hand the following three facts which are often still overlooked by Western critics of the SORT:

1. The more Russia’s strategic nuclear forces have declined over the last decade, the more it is Russia (and not the US) that is primarily interested in an agreed treaty on the strategic nuclear forces of both sides as well as an inspection regime similar to the existing one for START-I.
2. But simultaneously, the better the bilateral relationship develops between Washington and Moscow, the less important becomes the treaty for both sides. The strategic relationship between the US and Russia is already moving from one of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) of the Cold War period into one of Mutual Assured Security (MAS).¹¹⁹ Negotiated arms control then will have only residual importance. The Bush administration has already declared that it seeks a nuclear relationship with Russia similar to those between the US and its nuclear allies of Great Britain and France, where a strategic nuclear arms control or arms reduction treaty is no longer necessary.¹²⁰
3. Interestingly, the critics of the new treaty in Moscow as well as in Washington and Europe cling much more to the Cold War period and a mutual threat perception (or at least a lasting mutual mistrust) than those supporting the new treaty who are mostly concerned about very different threats in the world.

But critics, too, admit that lowering the number of deployed warheads decreases the number of warheads ready for quick use - therewith reducing risks of an unauthorized or accidental launch due to Russia's deteriorating early-warning capability. Nonetheless, it is understandable that Russia sought rules that would count warheads according to the maximum number any deployed delivery vehicle could carry similar to those of START-I. While the new SORT offers each side a much greater flexibility, at the same time it offers little predictability in regard to future strategic nuclear force structure - a central purpose of all former nuclear arms control treaties,¹²¹ but also the consequence of their former and to some extent still existing mutual threat perceptions. But as two US scholars have correctly pointed out:

"Indeed, with Washington and Moscow working toward friendship relations, the warheads Russia keeps in storage - not the ones it deploys on its ICBMs, bombers, and submarines - may well be the greater nuclear threat to the United States."¹²²

For Russia, the new treaty seems to offer a possibility it long has sought: to re-MIRV its ICBMs. In the Russian view, the combination of the end of the operational lifetimes of more than 60 percent of Russia's ICBMs, very low procurement rates of just 6-10 new missiles during the last four years and the transition to light ballistic missiles with single or few warheads, is leading to a radical decline in Russia's SNF around 2010. Therewith, a nuclear balance with a rising nuclear power such as China that has its own modernisation programme for strategic nuclear forces, including an expensive programme to develop MIRV warheads for its new ICBMs and SLBMs after 2010 is only a question of time.¹²³ Alexander A Pikayev, for instance, pointed out in 1999: "... maintaining this [nuclear] predominance [towards China] is vitally important for maintaining the fragile stability along the banks of the Amur River. A Russo-Chinese arms race would not be possible for Moscow as long as Russia adhered to the START II ban on MIRVed ICBMs."¹²⁴

However, another Russian military expert pointed out in June 2002 that it might be unrealistic to re-MIRV ICBMs because of the reference to START-I in the new SORT.¹²⁵ Further negotiations between Russia and the US about a limited Russian re-MIRVing with US consent may take place, if Washington has not already agreed to it.

But given the operational lifetimes of its older SS-18, SS-19, SS-24 and SS-25 ICBMs and the re-direction of financial resources away from strategic nuclear forces towards conventional forces, Russia might have only funds for re-MIRVing its new Topol-M ICBMs with three nuclear warheads in the future. Given the present production rate of just six new ICBMs a year, Russia may only be able to increase its strategic nuclear arsenal of around 1,000 warheads by not more than 100-200 warheads before 2010-2015. Even the new SORT, that allows a re-MIRVing, thus will not solve the underlying structural problems of Russia's future SNF but will just buy some limited time.

In this light, Russia now seems to have opted to withdraw from the provisions of START-II and to keep its present arsenal of MIRVed ICBMs. According to defence Minister Sergey Ivanov, Russia will retain some 154 SS-18 heavy ICBMs and 36 combat rail-mobile SS-24 - all carrying 10 MIRV warheads. Originally, those ICBMs were to be phased out before 2003 and eliminated before 2007 under START-II. Ivanov explained that this decision was not a response to the US withdrawal from the 1972 ABM treaty. At the same time, he hoped that these MIRVed ICBMs will be

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maintained operationally until 2016. But such an extending of the missiles' service lives seems highly uncertain and costly at the expense of the already extremely low number of newly procured SS-27 Topol-M ICBMs.¹²⁶ Whether this decision makes sense in the mid- and long-term future for Russia's SNF seems rather doubtful. Furthermore, it will be interesting to see whether the US will agree specifically to Russia's decision to maintain the heavy MIRVed SS-18 ICBMs which were the main US target for reductions under the past SALT and START frameworks as being the most destabilising weapons in the Soviet/Russian strategic nuclear arsenal.

Russia's Present Military Reform Concept

With President Putin's approval on 15 January 2001 of the "Plan for the Buildup of Military Forces to 2005" it became clear that even if there had been a political compromise, it essentially followed Kvashnin's proposals. The restructuring programme concentrates on re-balancing the force structure in favour of the ground forces, and emphasising combat training. It envisaged across-the-board cuts of personnel of 600,000, of which 365,000 would come from the regular services; this would reduce these forces from 1.2 million to 835,000. Originally the "other troops" were to be reduced by 60,000, but following a meeting on 9 November 2000, this figure rose to 105,000, with an additional loss of 120,000 civilian posts. In this way the proportion of the defence budget used for personnel will be reduced from 80 to 50 percent. Before the end of 2002, 270,000 of the 365,000 positions intended to be eliminated by 2005 should already have been cut.¹²⁷ Therewith, a smaller and more efficient army would be able to spend more on sophisticated high-tech weaponry. 70 percent of the defence budget had been spent on the soldiers' incomes, leaving just 30 percent for weapons. In the future, the ratio should shift to 60/40 in 2006 and 50/50 in 2011.¹²⁸

Table 7: Planned Reductions in the Russian Armed Forces ('000s)¹²⁹

	Armed Forces in 2000			Armed Forces in 2005		
	Servicemen	Civilians	Total	Servicemen	Civilians	Total
All forces	2,360	966	3,326	1,890	836	2,726
MOD	1,200			835		
Interior Ministry	200			167		
Other	960			888		

These reductions, however, will also lead to new defence problems. This is especially true in the Far East, where in future only 80,000 ground troops¹³⁰ will face more than 2 million Chinese soldiers along a border of more than 4,000 kilometres - and where China's strategic nuclear arsenal could grow from its current 300 to between 600 and 900 warheads by 2010-2015. This would call into question the Russian nuclear deterrent.¹³¹ Plans to merge the Strategic Rocket Forces with the Air Force further weaken the status of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces in the overall defence posture and reduce the strategic nuclear arsenal to less than 1,500 warheads. In 1998-99, just ten new Topol-M ICBMs had been produced.¹³² Although the production rate was planned to double and triple in the following years, production went down in 2001 and 2002 to not more than six each year - less than one-third of what had been planned. The rate of destruction of the SS-18 Satan MIRVed ICBMs is therefore ten times faster than the rate of purchasing single-warhead Topol-Ms. In the space sector, the production of intelligence, communication, warning, and navigation satellites was by 2000 already dead.¹³³ The orbiting group which supplied the Defence Ministry with intelligence reports and early-warning information was not modernised until 2001

despite the fact that the normal lifetime of 80 percent of Russia's military satellites was already over.¹³⁴ In 2001, Russia had 43 military satellites and about 20 dual application satellites in contrast to almost 200 it had had at the beginning of the 1990s. As a result, Russia is no longer capable of 24-hour reconnaissance from space. Russia's Global Navigational Satellite System (GLONASS), too, has only 9 satellites instead of 24 and thus cannot operate properly.¹³⁵

On 28 March 2001 Sergeyev was relieved of his post and became Putin's advisor for "problems of strategic stability". It was, however, not Kvashnin who became the new defence minister, but rather Sergey Ivanov, a trusted Putin advisor and secretary of the powerful Security Council. He nudged the reform process in a direction that favoured conventional forces; he reinstated the Supreme Command of Ground Forces that had been disbanded by Yeltsin and Sergeyev in 1997. But at the same time, he curbed Kvashnin's ambitions and manipulation of the General Staff to report directly to the President, circumventing the newly appointed civilian defence minister.¹³⁶

In April 2001 Sergei Ivanov outlined the most comprehensive concept in the new Putin era for reforming Russia's sprawling, ill-trained and under-funded and increasingly non-operational military. It confirmed that the cuts in troop numbers, rationalised weaponry, and outlined tighter budget controls. At the same time, he promised higher incomes of 60-100 percent for Russia's professional soldiers over the next ten years. He also confirmed previous plans to restructure Russia's SNF and to take out the Space Forces and Space Defence Force (responsible for satellites and missile defence),¹³⁷ which "produced an impressive economic effect" according to the Commander-in-Chief of the SRF, General Vladimir Yakovlev.¹³⁸ They will constitute a separate unit, as was the case before President Yeltsin ordered a controversial merger of these forces in 1997. In June 2001, Ivanov also dismissed Yakovlev, an ally of Igor Sergeyev, and appointed him the Chief of the Staff for co-ordinating co-operation within the CIS.

The shifting of funds away from the SNF to conventional forces was accompanied by a restructuring of the top military command. The newly appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces, Colonel-General Nikolay Kormiltsev, was also named deputy defence minister, in contrast to the Commanders-in-Chief of the air and naval forces. The airborne forces retained their status as an independent service, but their strength was to be reduced to 30,000 men.

At the beginning of 2002, President Putin approved an armaments programme until 2010 that places much more emphasis on research, development and engineering work, in which the project to develop and produce a fifth-generation multi-role fighter plays a very prominent role.¹³⁹ However, some Russian experts believe that financing this new armament programme is also still unrealistic in the next decade.¹⁴⁰

Better Times? Russia's Armed Forces in Summer 2002

"Military Chiefs have been deliberately sabotaging all attempts at serious reform of the armed forces since 1992. They still think they are preparing to fight a major war in which the West is the main potential enemy. And given that this is the case, they will never cut back the size of their forces."

(Pavel Felgenhauer in March 2002)¹⁴¹

Russia's official defence budget rose from 141 billion rubles in 2000 to 219 billion rubles in 2001, with additional funds to cover the costs of the war in Chechnya and military reform. Although the social situation in the military improved somewhat after Russia increased its military budget by another 25 percent in 2002 due to robust economic growth, and despite the shifting of funds to conventional forces the ground forces will not receive up-to-date military hardware by 2010. Although they have benefited from the reordering of financial resources, the ground forces claim to have just 28 percent of the defence budget - 40-50 percent below what they say they need.¹⁴² Indeed, the focus of new procurement spending is directed towards the modernisation and upgrading of air and naval weaponry and in particular satellites, high-precision weapon systems and reconnaissance-strike complexes. But their production will begin only after 2006 or even later.¹⁴³

Instead, approximately 50 percent of the 2002 defence budget for modernisation and new procurement will be spent on upgrading obsolete military hardware.¹⁴⁴ Personnel costs still represent more than 70 percent of Russia's defence expenditure.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, due to widespread misappropriation and embezzlement of military funds, even according to modest Russian calculations, over \$1 billion may have been stolen from the Armed Forces in 2001.¹⁴⁶ Moreover, Russia's 2002 budget was based on unrealistic or at least risky economic assumptions.¹⁴⁷ Funding revisions, as often happened during the 1990s, undermine predictability and responsibility inside as well as outside Russia.

Putin's force reductions and the modernisation of conventional forces signal, however, that the political leadership and part of the military establishment are slowly moving away from the old threat scenarios of the cold war. But these reductions on their own do not automatically improve the force's fitness for action. Nor is it clear that these reductions will suffice to overcome internal and operational problems. The military has not received a real 50 percent increase. Funding that was previously hidden in other budgets (though still not all of it) has now been included in official defence expenditure figures.¹⁴⁸

In the meantime, discussion about introducing a professional army seems to have been shelved albeit Putin promised a "compact, modern, well-paid professional army" by 2010 in November 2001.¹⁴⁹ President Yeltsin had already signed a decree in 1996 whereby the draft was to have been abolished from spring 2000. In 1998 the edict was amended and the phrase "from spring 2000" was replaced with "gradually, as the necessary conditions are created". In the following years, nothing was implemented; meanwhile the low pay has been the main reason why over 15,000 young officers under 30 resigned between 1999-2001. Every third position in the junior officer corps is now vacant. At the same time, Russia in 2000 had four times more generals and admirals than it could afford.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, the transition is financially expensive and politically risky given decades of Soviet tradition. It is dependent on sufficient funds for demobilisation (neither the Khrushchev, the

Gorbachev nor the Yeltsin era can be seen as a positive model for new bigger cuts in the Armed Forces) and the willingness of the officer corps to support Putin's long-term vision of professional armed forces. The Defence Ministry, including Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov and Chief of the General Staff Anatoly Kvashnin, however, has strengthened its resistance against the planned transition to a professional army¹⁵¹ albeit the demographic trends¹⁵² after 2005 will complicate any future conscription system. The demographic crisis will reduce the number of available conscripts by 30-40% in 2005-6, leaving virtually no-one to be drafted given the present rate of less than 12 percent of all available¹⁵³ who can be drafted into military service.¹⁵⁴ It still reflects the former Soviet ambitions for large armed forces. In the view of the Defence Ministry, the experiment to transfer the 76th airborne division in Pskov into a professional, all-volunteer force has failed and proven to be too expensive. But Pavel Felgenhauer pointed out the core of the problem:

"Of course, the result of the Pskov experiment has been all too predictable. The military is actively sabotaging any attempts at reform. However, without reform, with millions of servicemen and some 100,000 colonels in active service all told, there will be neither decent pay and service conditions nor a disciplined, modern force."¹⁵⁵

Commentators were already speculating that the draft might last 15-20 years longer.¹⁵⁶ In this context, the General Staff demanded a more stringent version of the draft law on "alternative service". The law adopted in April 2002 obliged Russia's young men who opt for alternative service to serve four years after they have finished secondary schools, instead of two years in uniform.¹⁵⁷ Another Russian military expert attacked the Defence Ministry with the words:

"The military themselves know it too well. They are absolutely unprepared to oppose these public moods. They are in no hurry to abolish the draft. They are unable to improve the real state of things in the armed forces. They have no idea how to make military service attractive for most young men. In consequence, the military plays the same mutual deception game, walks the same vicious circle (the conscript runs, the draft officer is hot on his heels) that compulsory military service has generated."¹⁵⁸

Unfortunately for military reform, Putin's long-term ally Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov seems also increasingly to disagree on almost every major security issue with the President. He appears to have become a representative of the military interests in the Kremlin, and that has fuelled speculation that Ivanov would be replaced.

Not only the mostly unchanged situation inside Russia's armed forces and the perceived insufficient funds to solve their problems, but also the geopolitical alignment between Moscow and Washington in Central Asia and the Middle East and the compromises in regard to START-III and the ABM treaty have provoked rising opposition among Russia's military at a time when Ivanov seems to be losing control of the armed forces.¹⁵⁹ President Putin, who met the high command of the Defence Ministry in October 2001 for a heated discussion, criticised the defence minister over the slow progress on military reforms.¹⁶⁰

Meanwhile, Kvashnin has bolstered his position as the leader of the "Chechen party" with his own men promoted to key posts in the Defence Ministry and the

armed forces.¹⁶¹ The government has counterbalanced his moves by strengthening the power of the FSB inside the military as a watchdog and by its own cadre policies. None of the eight deputy defence ministers has participated in the war in Chechnya. Those with Chechen experience are kept in the provinces. Nonetheless, an alarming growth of war-fighting culture in the military has been identified. Their rise could not only increase their influence inside their own organisation but in the political arena as well.¹⁶²

Conclusions & Prospects: A “Revolution in Military Reforms” is Still Waiting

“Russia can take part in a nuclear apocalypse on equal terms, but the Russian Army is not prepared for a modern war with the use of conventional weapons.”

(Mikhail Khodarenok in March 2002)¹⁶³

During the 1990s, Russia's strategic nuclear weapons constituted in reality a declining instrument of war rather than a symbol of Russia's self-image for its place in the world. Recent changes imply “denuclearisation” of defence policy in general and of Russia's strategic nuclear posture in particular, and contrast with a growing “nuclearisation” since 1992, especially in the enhanced status accorded to substrategic nuclear weapons. The lowering of the nuclear threshold to the regional or even local level, as outlined in Russia's Strategic Concept of January 2000 and in its Military Doctrine of April 2000, will remain for the most part unanswered in the next decade and in fact depend more on the actual efficiency of conventional forces in low-intensity conflicts than on the formal compromises laid down in these documents. However, the re-prioritising of funds to conventional forces suggests that the nuclear threshold may rise again if the situation in the armed forces in general, combat readiness and efficiency significantly improve. For the time being, in its own best interest, the West needs to follow closely those Russian military policy discussions, that until recently have been less concerned with nuclear deterrents than with the actual tactical nuclear weapons to be used at different levels. The West needs to ensure that these policy discussions - including Russian readiness to resort to pre-emptive and preventive nuclear attacks in loosely defined “crisis situations” - are aired in the newly established NATO-Russia Council and other fora.

Given the different threat perceptions, it is hard to understand why distinguished civilian experts like Aleksei Arbatov or Sergey Rogov cling to a “virtual superpower status” and the priority of modernising the strategic nuclear force when they themselves do not seriously believe in an American first-strike nuclear attack on their country. By contrast, the dangers of a nuclear escalation of local and regional conflicts because of the poor state of conventional forces have constantly increased. The long-term reduction of the strategic nuclear arsenal is a precondition for solving the military's internal problems and improving the quality of technical servicing of Russia's strategic nuclear hardware to increase its safety.

Whether the lifetime of Russia's older ICBMs can be extended further seems highly uncertain. More than 60 percent of Russia's ICBMs are beyond their warranty life. The life-span of the SS-18s had already been extended from 15 to 22 years, whereas the lifetime of the SS-24 was extended only by one year. Even the 360 newer SS-25 (almost half of Russia's ICBM force, produced between 1985-1994) will reach their

end of their lifetimes between 2008 and 2010.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, to extend the operational life of its older missiles, Russia needs spare parts which are produced only in Dnepropetrovsk in Ukraine. In the 1990s, Russia had great difficulties in maintaining its older missiles properly. Any extension programme would also be expensive and not cost-effective (given the operational lifetime of its ballistic missiles with the exception of the new Topol-M), leaving even fewer funds for the modernisation of the SNF and would not solve the structural problems, just postpone them for few years.

Despite the fact that even the official Russian defence budget has tripled during the last three years, the military is still criticising substantial shortfalls.¹⁶⁵ According to Deputy Defence Minister Colonel-General Igor Puzanov, lack of funding for training was not only undermining the armed forces, but also ruled out the planned replacement of conscription-based forces with a professional army in the immediate future.¹⁶⁶ At the same time, the command of the SRF still insists on uniting Russia's nuclear triad - land, navy and air forces - under one central strategic command. While this would certainly raise the status of Russia's SNF, it remains questionable whether nuclear modernisation will be hastened at the cost of conventional forces in the foreseeable future.¹⁶⁷

Any re-shifting of funds again to the SNF has become even more unrealistic given that the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington have highlighted new urgent priorities in international security and for Russia too. Its air defence, for instance, is in a critical condition and cannot effectively safeguard strategic sites against suicide hijacker attacks. Even the then Chief of Russia's Air Force, Anatoly Kornukov, admitted in an interview that a plane taking off somewhere in the Moscow region could hit the Kremlin before it could be intercepted by air defence systems because the level of combat readiness requires 10-12 minutes to bring it up.¹⁶⁸ From 1994-98, the Russian air defence force dramatically declined: the number of fighter aviation units was reduced by 2.8 times, that of air defence missile units by 2.1 times; in 2000, the air defence troops received only 65 percent of required funding; purchases of new weaponry have stopped; obsolete weaponry systems account for 65-80 percent of the air defence troops' armoury, and only 80 percent of the armament is combat ready, while Air Force units have received only between 6-8 percent of the needed fuel. Hence, in 1999 and 2000 an average fighter pilot spent just 11-12 hours annually in the air. Meanwhile, nearly half of the most important state objects have been deprived of direct air defence missile protection. A few days after the terrorist attack on the US, a Russian analysis warned:

“... even if unprecedented measures are taken to restore the resources of air defence, these efforts will not result in effective protection against air terrorism. Russia is too vast a country, and the number of strategically important or hazardous facilities on its territory runs to many hundreds. It is impossible to supply each such site with an air defence missile brigade or a fighter regiment equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry and placed on high alert status.”¹⁶⁹

Moreover, the increase in the defence budgets since 2000 was to a certain extent the result of rising global oil, gas and metal prices which allowed higher revenues for Russia's state budget. But becoming the hostage of world prices for energy and metal is not a sound financial basis for military reform in the forthcoming decade. Furthermore, although Russia has become the largest arms exporter (according to SIPRI) by accounting for 12 percent of the world trade in weapons and US\$4.97\$

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billion of arms (compared with \$4.56 billion worth of weapons sold by the US) in 2001,¹⁷⁰ which is the most important source of financing research and developing programmes for the military as well as the basis for survival of its largely unreformed military-industrial complex, it is similarly questionable whether Russia will be able to maintain its arms exports on this high level in the next few years.

Even more important is the fact that the internal conditions such as *dedovshchina*, corruption and the collapse of the conscription system have hardly improved.¹⁷¹ Alexander Golts, for instance, pointed out in July 2002:

“Corruption in the officer corps is at such unprecedented levels that even the statement of the Prosecutor General’s Office - to the effect that the mine that killed dozens in Kapiysk on 9 May had been obtained by terrorists from officers of the Russian army - failed to shock anyone. Despite all promises of doubled pay, officers are doing all they can to quit the Armed Forces, the sooner the better. There are 50 military educational establishments in Russia, but a quarter of lieutenant positions remain vacant. As for senior officers, Ivanov himself doesn’t think much of their professional skills. In short, soldiers view the Armed Forces as a prison, while officers lack initiative and are corrupt and incompetent. The military is in the process of becoming a threat to its own people.”¹⁷²

Anatoly Kvashnin himself confirmed the condition of Russia’s armed forces on 30 May 2002 at a conference on crime in the Armed Forces. He described the present situation in the military as “beyond critical” with a decline in combat readiness which “could become irreversible”.¹⁷³ Another official report stated recently that 46 percent of servicemen live below the poverty line, whereas in the Interior Ministry 53 percent and in the Federal Border Service 57 percent of families are officially impoverished.¹⁷⁴ Although those figures are of course alarming and should attract the necessary attention of the Russian public and government, the Defence Ministry seems to use the depressing situation in the armed forces “to side-step the issue of military reform and substitute it with the problem of defence financing”.¹⁷⁵ Although Kvashnin bolstered his position inside the military after the conflict with Sergeyev, he is accused mostly outside the armed forces of plots and intrigues, undermining Defence Minister Ivanov’s position and not implementing military reforms.¹⁷⁶

Above all, the Defence Ministry needs to fight corruption itself instead of deliberately humiliating subordinates who are forced to break many laws on a daily basis in order to function at all and to survive with their families. As Alexander Golts rightly described the situation in June 2002:

“... the Defence Ministry has been creating almost perfect conditions for ubiquitous embezzlement. Even though a fifth of state spending goes to the military, the public has no opportunity to monitor defence spending. Even Duma deputies, apart from Defence Committee members, do not know the purposes for which the Defence Ministry appropriates money. Meanwhile, the Defence Minister and Chief of the General Staff continue making great efforts to classify all information related to the Armed Forces as a secrets.”¹⁷⁷

In this light, the debates on future military reform are continuing as a 15-year long reform concept, comprising four phases, as Colonel-General Andrey Nikolayev

(Chairman of the Defence Committee of the Duma) underscored in February 2002.¹⁷⁸ Although Putin's and Ivanov's concept is moving in the right direction, decisive measures may no longer be sufficient. What Russia needs is a "revolution in military reforms" that goes much deeper and wider than the agreed cuts in the regular armed forces and other troops.¹⁷⁹ It becomes even more important as the rest of the world - including NATO countries and China - undertake very ambitious military reforms.

Thus far, Putin's stated policy of increasing the official defence budget has not had a real impact on the Russian armed forces and its operational readiness. The Defence Ministry continues to submit extremely unrealistic financial planning: for instance, it submitted to the government in 2000 another proposal to replace 50 percent of military equipment over the period 2001-2010 with new or modernised weapon systems, for which the defence budget must increase to between 6.0 and 6.6 percent of GDP - double present official defence expenditures, over the next five years.¹⁸⁰

But the core of financial problems for Russia's military is not rooted in insufficient funds, but rather its clinging to traditional Soviet threat perceptions vis-à-vis the US and NATO as well as unwillingness to face the real problems and challenges of Russia's security policies. Furthermore, the military's lack of transparency in defence spending and civilian accountability at nearly all levels allows massive corruption and bureaucratic game-playing. Only on the foundation of a real, democratic, civilian, parliamentary control over the defence sector will it be possible to initiate a wide-ranging and deepening military reform that will last for at least a decade instead of proposing and initiating unrealistic reform concepts which can never be implemented due to the constraints of the overall economic foundation. The political and the military elite need to understand that the unstable internal conditions of Russia's military forces pose a threat to the democratisation process in Russia and to its socio-economic stabilisation - a fact that is not fully understood in the West either. Demands for higher increases in Russia's defence budget will not resolve the core of its problems. It speaks for itself that Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov published in July 2002 an unusual article in one of the most important newspapers in order to justify Putin's pro-Western foreign policy against rising resistance in the political and military elite and accusations of pursuing a policy of "unilateral concessions vis-à-vis the USA"¹⁸¹ - ahead of a convocation of ambassadors which had not taken place for 20 years.¹⁸²

As it looks now, in the coming decade the significance of at least the strategic nuclear weapons in Russian defence policy will continue to decline. The dreadful terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 too may have important consequences for Russian defence policy in focusing attention on strengthening conventional forces, while further weakening the arguments of the "atom lobby" and the "rocket mafia". However, a successful military reform will be feasible only after the Chechen war ends. That, unfortunately, still seems unrealistic given the vested interests of those officers and soldiers involved in widespread weapon sales and smuggling in the Chechen region and the lack of will to seek such a peaceful solution on both sides. But a "revolution in military reforms" cannot wait forever in Russia.

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- ⁹ NG, 11 July 2000, pp1 and 6.
- ¹⁰ *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* (hereinafter NVO), No 28, 3 August 2001.
- ¹¹ RG, 26 December 1997, pp4-5.
- ¹² See, inter alia, Frank Umbach, 'Zwang zur Militärreform', here p58f.
- ¹³ On the situation until the middle of 1994 see, for example, Heinrich Tiller/F Umbach, 'Continuity and Change of the Russian Armed Forces under Yeltsin: Hostages between the Past and the Future' (in German), Report of BIOst, No 52, Cologne.
- ¹⁴ Oleg Odnokolenko, *Segodnya*, 28 September 2000, pp1-2.
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- ¹⁶ See also F Umbach, 'The Role and Influence of the Military Establishment in Russia's Foreign and Security Policies in the Yeltsin Era', *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, September 1996, pp467-500, here p469ff.
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- ¹⁸ See Stefan Wagstyl, *Financial Times*, 10 May 2000, pVIII ('Russia').
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- ³⁹ See Alexander Shaburkin, *Vremya MN*, 12 April 2000, p7. See also 'A Dwindling Military Forces to Compensate', *Stratfor.Com*, 18 April 2000; Sophie Lambroschini, 'Chechnya: Draft Avoidance Rises as Russia Ponders Professional Army', RFE/RL Analyses, 14 July 2000.
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- ⁷⁷ Mikhail Timofeyev, NVO, 28 July-3 August 2000, pp1 and 4.
- ⁷⁸ See also Nikolai Sokov, 'The Fate of Russian Nuclear Weapons: An Anticlimax on August 11', CNS-Report (Monterey Institute of International Studies), 14 August 2000.
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- ⁸⁰ The document in *Izvestiya*, 18 November 1993, pp1-4 modified the 1982 Soviet pledge not to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states (as a denuclearised Ukraine) - see also Dunbar Lockwood, 'Russia Revises Nuclear Policy, Ends Soviet 'No-First-Use' Pledge', *Arms Control Today*, December 1993, p19. Minister of Defence Army General Pavel Grachev, had declared it in an article four months earlier, see KZ, 9 June, pp1 and 5.
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- ⁸³ See RG, 26 December 1997, pp4-5.
- ⁸⁴ See also Aleksei G Arbatov, 'Voyennaya reforma: doktrina, voyska, finansy', here p8.
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- ⁹¹ Ibid.
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- ¹¹⁶ Quoted following *Itogi*, No 18, 2 May 2000, pp10-13.
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- ¹²⁰ As, for instance, Kerry M Kartchner, Senior Adviser for Missile Defense Policy, Office of Strategic and Theater Defense, Bureau of Arms Control of the State Department has stated: "*The US goal - rather than accepting the legacy of an adversarial relationship based on weapons cuts, decade-long arms control negotiations, and mutual hostility - will be build a more positive relationship based on common objectives and mutual interests*" - Kerry M Kartchner, *Missile Defences and New Approaches to Deterrence*, *US Foreign Policy Agenda*, July 2002 (<http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itps/0702/ijpe/toc.htm>).
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- ¹²⁴ Alexander A Pikayev, 'The Rise and Fall of START II: The Russian View', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace/Non-Proliferation Project/Global Policy Program, No. 6, September 1999 Chapter 4, here p3 (www.ceip.org/programs/npp/pikayev.htm).
- ¹²⁵ See Sergei Sokut, NG, 21 June 2002, pp1 and 9. However, he did not specify the specific clauses in regard to START-I. *START-I* envisages the reduction of the Soviet Union's heavy deployed missiles to 154 (SS-18s). Furthermore, the treaty allowed two existing missiles types to be reduced from a certain type not to exceed 500 warheads. In order to minimise the destabilising effect of these warheads being returned to their launchers (re-MIRVing), the *START-I* treaty limited the total number of unloaded warheads to 1,250 on each side - see Pavel Podvig (Ed), 'Russia Strategic Nuclear Forces', (Cambridge, Mass.-London: The MIT Press, 2001), here p22. In this context, it seems that it would allow Russia a re-MIRVing within this *START-I* ceiling of 1,250 warheads. However, *Article III, 5d*

of START-I states as follows: "A Party shall not have the right to attribute to ICBMs of a new type a number of warheads greater than the smallest number of warheads attributed to any ICBM to which that Party has attributed a reduced number of warheads pursuant to subparagraph >c< ..."

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¹²⁷ Alexander Golts, *JDW*, 11 July 2001, p4.

¹²⁸ Interviewed in KZ, 25 April 2001. See also Robert Cottrell, *Financial Times*, 26 April 2001, p3.

¹²⁹ Julian Cooper, 'Russian military expenditure and arms production', in SIPRI 9Ed), 'Yearbook 2001: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security', (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press 2001), p322.

¹³⁰ Grigory Tikhonov, *Tribuna*, 20 January 2001, p1.

¹³¹ I have analysed the development programmes of Russia's and China's strategic nuclear arsenals in F Umbach, 'Strategic Trends of Global Denuclearization and Nuclearization - Implications for Japan's Security Policies, Regional Stability and the TMD-Debate in East Asia', in *Hiroshima Peace Science*, No 27, April 2001, pp63-118.

¹³² Yuri Golotyuk, *Vremya Novosti*, 29 September 2000, p1.

¹³³ See Sergei Delyagin, *Vremya MN*, 18 October 2000, pp1 and 3, here p3.

¹³⁴ See Vladimir Perov, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 8 June 2001, p2.

¹³⁵ *Vladivostok News*, 28 September 2001 (on-line version).

¹³⁶ Pavel Felgenhauer, *Moscow Times*, 18 January 2001.

¹³⁷ See also Viktor Sokirko, *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 31 May 2001.

¹³⁸ Interviewed by Ludmila Averina, *Trud*, 13 May 2000, p2.

¹³⁹ See Nikolai Novichkov, 'Russia Adopts 10-Year Arms Plan', *JDW*, 6 February 2002, p16 and idem, 'Russia Puts Money into Research, Development', *ibid*, 20 February 2002, p20.

¹⁴⁰ See Viktor Litovkin, *Obshchaya Gazeta*, No 4, 4 January 2002, p6 and idem, *ibid*, 31 January 2002.

¹⁴¹ Pavel Felgenhauer, *Moscow Times*, 21 March 2002.

¹⁴² See the interview with Colonel-General Nikolai Kormiltsev by Nikolai Poroskov, *Vek*, No 1-2, 11-17 January 2002, pp1 and 3.

¹⁴³ See 'No Big Changes Planned in Size of Russian Arms Budget', *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, 23 January 2002; Alexander Golts, 'The Shadow That Lags Behind', *Yezhenedelnyy Zhurnal*, No 25, July 2002, quoted here following *CDI Russia Weekly*, No 213, 5 July 2002.

¹⁴⁴ See Vadim Solovyev, *NVO*, 33/2002, 7 September 2001, pp1 and 3; Sergei Putilov, *Vremya MN*, 14 June 2001, p4; Mark Galeotti, 'Budget for Defence Reform', *JIR*, March 2002, pp50-51.

¹⁴⁵ See Alexander Golts, *JDW*, 11 July 2001, p4.

¹⁴⁶ Sergei Delyagin, *Vremya MN*, 18 October 2000, pp1 and 3.

¹⁴⁷ See Suzanna Farizova, *Kommersant*-daily, 18 September 2002, p2; 'Moscow Budget Belt to Tighten', *Stratfor.Com*, 30 August 2001; Simon Saradzhyan, *Moscow Times*, 8 June 2001, p3.

¹⁴⁸ See also V Aleksin, *NG*, 15 September 2000, pp1 and 3; Alexander Bekker, *Vedomosti*, 25 August 2000, p A1.

¹⁴⁹ See Vadim Saranov, *Versiya*, 1/2002, p5; *Kommersant*, 22 November 2001 Anatoly Dokuchayev; KZ, 6 October 2001, p1.

¹⁵⁰ Mikhail Krugov, *Novaya Gazeta*, No 41, August 2000, p16.

¹⁵¹ See also Alexander Golts, 'Russia's General Staff Resisting Putin's Fore Reforms', *JDW*, 13 February 2002, p10; Ilya Bulavinov, *Kommersant*, 19 April 2002, p4.

¹⁵² The average life expectancy dropped by an astonishing six years, from 70.1 in 1986/87 to just 64 years in 1994. Russia now occupies just the 100th spot on a world-wide list of life-expectancy rankings. On the background of its demographic problems, its manifold negative dimensions and implications for Russia's political and economic future as well as for its military see F Umbach, 'Russia as a 'Virtual Great Power'', here p92f.

¹⁵³ Like many other official numbers and statistics, they are often used on the basis of intended calculations and miscalculations for political purposes of the Russian Defence Ministry. Here again the question is how the General Staff count recruits. Based on the

independent calculations of Lyudmila Vakhina, a member of the *Memorial Human Rights Centre*, around 400,000 young people come to military registration and enlistment every year. If this is 11%, this means that 100% is 3.5 million people. Judging from demographic reports, there are currently only 1.1 to 1.2 million young people aged 18. The explanation can be found in the fact that the number of citizens ranging from 18 to 27 (around 10 million people) minus people who have served in the Army and who cannot serve in the Army due to problems with health (around a third) is 3.5 million people. This group according to Vakhina also contains people who have occupational deferments. In other words, we will get 11% to 12% if the number of recruits called up during one year will be the numerator, and the number of all potential recruits will be the denominator – see Georgy Tselms, *Novye Izvestiya*, 1 June 2002, p4.

¹⁵⁴ See Boris Nemtsov, NG, 2 April 2002, p2; Vadim Solovyov, NG, 12 April 2002, p10.

¹⁵⁵ Pavel Felgenhauer, *Moscow Times*, 18 July 2002.

¹⁵⁶ Vladimir Georgiyev, NG, 16 January 2002, p2.

¹⁵⁷ Kirill Vasilenko, *Vremya Novostey*, 18 April 2002, p1.

¹⁵⁸ Leonid Radzikhovskiy, *Itogi*, 12 February 2002. On the controversial discussions inside Russia see also Miriam Neubert, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 14 February 2002, p8; Markus Wehner, *FAZ*, 14 February 2002, p5; Jens Hartmann, *Die Welt*, 30 January 2002, p6.

¹⁵⁹ See Vadim Solovyev, NG, 13 November 2001 and idem, NVO, 7/2002, 1-14 March 2002, p1. See also Vladimir Georgiyev, NG, 18 October 2001, pp1-2.

¹⁶⁰ Ilya Bulavinov, *Kommersant*, 18 October 2001, pp 1 and 2.

¹⁶¹ See Vladimir Semiryaga, *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 28 March 2002, p2.

¹⁶² Pavel Baev, 'President Putin and His Generals. Bureaucratic Control and War-Fighting Culture', PONARS Policy Memo Series, No 205, November 2001.

¹⁶³ Mikhail Kodarenok, NVO, 9/2002, 22-29 March 2002, p3.

¹⁶⁴ See also Pavel Podvig (Ed), 'Russian Strategic Nuclear Forces', (Cambridge. Mass.-London: The MIT Press, 2001), here p655 (fn 25).

¹⁶⁵ Yury Golotyuk, *Vremya Novostey*, 26 September 2001, p2.

¹⁶⁶ See Robin Hughes, JDW, 13 June 2001, p12.

¹⁶⁷ On the future prospects of the Russian Armed forces see Stephen J Cimbala (Ed), 'The Russian Military into the Twenty-First Century', (London-Portland, OR, 2001) and Jan Leijonhielm et al, 'Russian Military Capability in a Ten-Year-Perspective', (Stockholm: FOA-Institution for Security Policy and Strategy/Department of Defence Analysis), April 1999.

¹⁶⁸ Interview of Kornukov by Sergei Sokut, NG, 13 September 2001, p1.

¹⁶⁹ So the analysis by Mikhail Khodarenok, NVO, No 34, 14 September 2001, p5. See also Nikolai Novichkov, 'Russian Air Forces Facing Protracted Crisis', JDW, 23 January 2002, p4.

¹⁷⁰ Sergei Blagov, *Asia Times*, 2 July 2002.

¹⁷¹ See, for instance, Mikhail Khodarenok, NG, 20 September 2001, p2.

¹⁷² Alexander Golts, 'The Shadow That Lags Behind', *Yezhenedelnyy Zhurnal*, No 25, July 2002, quoted here following *CDI Russia Weekly*, No 213, 5 July 2002.

¹⁷³ Pavel Felgenhauer, *Moscow Times*, 18 July 2002.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid and Vadim Solovyev, NVO, 15/2002, 17-23 May 2002, pp1 and 4.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ See Vladimir Urban, *Novyye Izvestiya*, 22 May 2002, pp1 and 4 and Igor Korotchenko, NVO, 7/2002, 1-14 March 2002, p8.

¹⁷⁷ Alexander Golts, *Yezhenedelnyy Zhurnal*, No 23, 18 June 2002, here following the quotation in *CDI Russia Weekly*, No 211, 21 June 2002.

¹⁷⁸ See Andrei Nikolayev, NVO, 4/2002, 8 February 2002 (on-line version); the interview with him by Igor Korotchenko, NG, 4 February 2002, and the critical reaction by Valentin Rog/Pyotr Deinekin, ibid, 10/2002, 29 March-4 April 2002, pp1 and 4.

¹⁷⁹ See also Vadim Solovyev, NVO, 16/2002, 12-18 April 2002, p1.

¹⁸⁰ Nikolai Novichkov, JDW, June 14, 2000, p3.

¹⁸¹ Leonid Radzikhovskiy, *Itogi*, No 11, 2002; Igor Korotchenko, NG, 6 March 2002. In February 2002, 20 retired generals and admirals attacked President Putin in an open letter that his reforms would ruin Russia and his foreign policy contradicted Russia's interests. They demanded the re-establishment of the socialist system and the "plan-market-economy" – see *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 22 February 2002. One of the most outspoken critics of Putin's

pro-Western policy is Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov who was ironically until 2001 the head of the international co-operation section in the Russian Defence Ministry, responsible for all foreign contacts of the military. Although he has been dismissed, he has been transferred to the position of Vice-President of the Academy of Geopolitical Sciences where he is educating the next generation of Russia's officer corps in a highly influential institution to shape the military's future geopolitical and geo-strategic thinking. As an example of his outspoken criticism see his interview by Yelena Aleksandrova, *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*, 5 April 2002, pp8-9.

¹⁸² Therein, he seems to indicate that Russia would not hinder a possible US military action against Iraq - see his interview in *Izvestiya*, 10 July 2002.

An edited version of this paper will be published in Anne C Aldis/Roger N McDermott (Eds), *Russian Military Reform 1992-2002*, Cass, 2003, forthcoming.

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ISBN 1-904423-01-9

Published By:

Defence Academy of the
United Kingdom

Conflict Studies Research Centre

Haig Road
Camberley
Surrey
GU15 4PQ
England

Telephone: (44) 1276 412995

Fax: (44) 1276 686880

E-mail: csrc@defenceacademy.mod.uk

<http://www.csrc.ac.uk>

ISBN 1-904423-01-9